

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application.

CLAIMS STATUS

Applicants have canceled claims 6, 21, 23-25 and 38, without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuing applications directed to the subject matter of the canceled claims.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 7, 12, 20, 22 and 26, without prejudice or disclaimer, to correct an inadvertent typographical error and to advance the prosecution. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuing applications directed to the subject matter omitted by the present amendment. Support for the amended claims may be found throughout the specification as filed and, in particular, for amended claim 1 in original claim 6 and for amended claim 20, in original claims 21 and 23-25. No new matter has been added.

Applicants have introduced new claims 39-68. Support for the new claims may be found throughout the specification as filed and in, particular, for claim 39 in original claims 1 and 11 and for claim 56 in original claims 20 and 35. No new matter has been added.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating on pages 3-4 of the Office Action that claims 36-37 are allowable and that claims 6-12, 25-27 and 35 would be allowable if rewritten in an independent form. In response, the limitation of claim 6 was added to claim 1; claim 11 was rewritten in independent form as new claim 32; the limitations of claim 25 and intervening claims 21 and 23-24 were added to claim 20 and claim 35 was rewritten in independent form as new claim 56.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-5, 13-15, 18-24, 28-29 and 38 stand rejected as anticipated by Kobayashi (U.S. patent no. 6,823,724).

Applicants submit that amended claim 1 includes all the elements of original claim 6, which, according to the PTO, would be allowable if rewritten in an independent form, while

amended claim 20 includes all the elements of original claim 25, which also would be allowable if rewritten in an independent form.

Thus, the revised claim set obviates the rejection.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 16-17 and 30-34 stand rejected as obvious over Kobayashi (U.S. patent no. 6,823,724) and Clabes (U.S. patent no. 5,345,816). Applicants believe that the revised claim set obviates the rejection.

NEW CLAIMS 39-67

Claim 39 and its dependent claims 40-55 are allowable because claim 39 incorporates all the elements of original claim 11, which, according to the PTO, is allowable if rewritten in an independent form.

Claim 56 and its dependent claims 57-67 are allowable because claim 56 incorporates all the elements of original claim 35, which, according to the PTO, is allowable if rewritten in an independent form.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

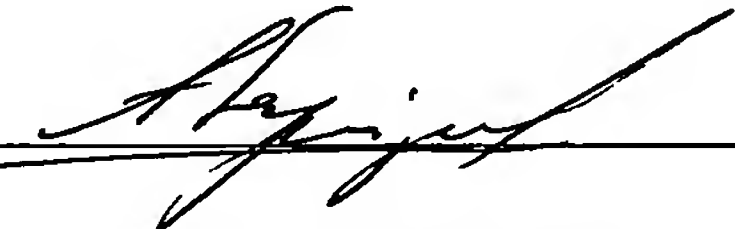
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing or a credit card payment form being unsigned, providing incorrect information resulting in a rejected credit card transaction, or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If

any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith,
Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment
of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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